

Post-Conflict Demobilization in Africa

Report of the Workshop Kampala, November 9-11, 1994

Introduction

The workshop on post-conflict demobilization in Africa, sponsored by the Organization of African Unity and organized jointly by the Organization of African Unity and the Global Coalition for Africa, was held in Kampala, November 9-11, 1994. H. E. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, gave the keynote address.

The purpose of the workshop was to share experiences and information on demobilization and reintegration in Africa, with a view to promoting a better understanding of the complexities of the processes, and defining issues and problems which need to be taken into account. In this way it was hoped that the workshop would contribute to the effective design and implementation of future programs. Participation in the workshop was largely from those African countries which had either implemented demobilization and reintegration programs in the past, those which were currently in the process of implementing them, and those which had expressed an interest in the issue. In addition, regional and sub-regional organizations were represented, as were northern countries and international organizations, given the role of the international community in demobilization and reintegration programs in Africa to date.¹

The workshop, which was co-chaired by the OAU and the GCA Secretariat, focussed largely on actual country experiences of designing and implementing demobilization and reintegration programs. Representatives of Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe gave detailed presentations on their country programs, while the representatives of Nigeria, Rwanda and Sudan also provided information on their experiences. In addition to country cases, the workshop also discussed specific aspects of demobilization and reintegration programs, including the role of the international community and financing of such programs. Attention was also given to related issues such as disarmament and the control and disposition of arms, and regional and national security requirements for effective demobilization and reintegration.

This report summarizes the main points of the workshop, but does not provide either detailed information on country cases, or reflect the richness of the discussions.

Discussion

The country presentations clearly indicated the range of issues which have to be addressed in demobilization and reintegration programs, and also the widely different circumstances in which post-conflict demobilization and reintegration programs have been implemented to date in Africa. Although all the programs were part of post-conflict reconstruction, the political, social and economic environment

¹ A list of participants is appended. African countries which were represented at the workshop were Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. From the north, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States and the United Kingdom were represented. In addition, the Commission of European Communities, ECOWAS, ILO, UNECA, UNDP, the United Nations Departments of Peacekeeping and Political Affairs, and the World Bank were also represented, along with the OAU and the GCA Secretariat.

in which they were undertaken differed in each case. This not only affected the scope and nature of the programs, but also their timing and sequencing.

In some instances, relatively rapid demobilization was undertaken according to the terms of peace agreements, while in others all forces were integrated first into an army of national unity, with demobilization taking place either considerably later, or over a longer period of time. Some programs were implemented under the auspices of the United Nations, as part of a larger peace effort also overseen by the U N , while others had non-U N third party involvement. Yet others were undertaken without external monitoring. Most of the programs had external funding, although the involvement of donors in the design and implementation of the programs varied.

While all of the country-level demobilization programs were concerned with post-conflict reconstruction, military re-structuring for economic and security reasons was also an important consideration in the design and implementation of programs. All of the country representatives stressed the need for the creation of professional, well-trained, efficient armed forces to meet internal and regional security needs. However, they also indicated that large armies were beyond their capacity to maintain. Hence all the programs were intended to reduce military spending over the long-term, even if in the short to medium term relatively large militaries were maintained for political or security reasons.

The country presentations and discussions clearly indicated that demobilization and reintegration are complex processes, which have to be seen in the specific country context in which they are being implemented. Participants stressed that as demobilization and reintegration programs both affect and are affected by a range of other conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction issues, they should be undertaken as integral components of broader conflict management efforts. As they involve a range of political, social, economic, and technical issues that no single department or agency can manage, demobilization and reintegration programs require coordination of a variety of actors. Additionally, programs usually involve the international community, as donors and/or as neutral parties to peace processes. Above all, demobilization and reintegration programs require political will and the commitment of all parties if they are to be effectively implemented and contribute to a climate of stability and security.

Experience indicated that demobilization and reintegration programs were more complicated, took longer, and were more costly than had originally been envisaged. Participants therefore stressed the need for flexibility in designing and implementing programs, and also for programs to be realistic, implementable, and suited both to the circumstances pertaining in individual countries and to the profile of the ex-combatants. They also emphasized that demobilization and reintegration programs require adequate funding, made available in a timely manner. It was agreed that, though different, demobilization and reintegration should be seen as separate components of a single process, and that they require a long-term perspective. Participants cautioned against focussing attention only on demobilization, and emphasized that adequate attention and resources also need to be given to reintegration. Several participants indicated that in their experience demobilization had been successful but reintegration had not, with large numbers of people either remaining unemployed, or being absorbed into the public sector.

Demobilization as a conflict management issue

It was agreed that peace, stability and security are essential for sustainable development and democracy in Africa, and that demobilization and reintegration should be seen in terms of conflict management, as elements of both conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In immediate post-conflict

situations, ineffective or incomplete demobilization and disarmament present a serious threat to the peace process, and can lead to a renewal of hostilities. In addition, if the peace process breaks down for other reasons, a return to armed conflict is more likely if parties to the conflict still have large militias at their disposal. In the longer term, reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants is also important, as otherwise they can either join armed insurgents or become mercenaries. Even if they do not join organized forces, they can contribute to civil insecurity through general banditry.

Participants stressed that demobilization and reintegration programs, while an important part of the conflict management process, cannot be seen as solutions to conflict in and of themselves. Nor do they ensure peace and stability. Rather, if a renewal of hostilities is to be avoided, they should be implemented along with broader conflict management initiatives, by which the original causes of conflict are addressed. Indeed, it is unlikely that demobilization and reintegration would be successful unless the causes of conflict were addressed, as parties to the conflict would not abide by agreements, nor would they willingly disband their troops.

Participants noted that frequently, though not always, post-conflict demobilization takes place within the context of a general peace agreement or negotiated settlement. They agreed that in such instances there is need for careful consideration of the terms of the peace agreement, in order to ensure that demobilization programs are implementable, and that demobilization and disarmament can be effectively undertaken. They also noted that, while peace agreements should lay out the broad parameters for demobilization and the creation of unified armed forces, it could be useful for the details of demobilization to be negotiated separately. As peace agreements of necessity impose time pressures which can complicate the demobilization process, it was suggested that planning for potential demobilization should take place during peace negotiations, rather than once an agreement had been reached. It was also suggested that information about other demobilization programs should be made available during peace negotiations, to ensure that negotiators understand what is feasible in terms of both time and cost.

Military restructuring and creation of national armed forces

Post-conflict demobilization usually involves some restructuring, although not necessarily downsizing, of armed forces. Several participants stressed that immediate post-conflict demobilization should not be seen as an end in itself, but also as part of a longer process of making military establishments more streamlined, effective, efficient, and better able to respond to the challenges of a changing security environment. However, this requires a long-term perspective and agreement on the composition and size of national forces, which can be difficult in immediate post-conflict situations.

It was noted that the formation of national armies can play a significant role in peace building and reconciliation. In this regard, however, the importance of both equity and transparency in the process were emphasized. A complex set of issues to do with training, education and skill levels, past experience and expectations have to be addressed, if the resulting force is to be professional and neutral, and demobilized ex-combatants assured that they have been treated fairly.²

2 Most participants indicated that creation of national armies was complex and difficult to achieve in the short term. Although South Africa presents an extreme example of the difficulties of creating an army of national unity out of a number of disparate forces with different backgrounds and training, all of the other countries also faced similar issues.

Participants also noted the importance of timing and sequencing of demobilization, and that in the short term it is perhaps necessary to create a larger army in order to integrate and accommodate different forces, so that demobilization can take place on an equitable basis. In such instances, many of the tensions faced by demobilizing large numbers of ex-combatants quickly under the terms of a peace agreement are avoided, and demobilization can then take place over a longer term.³ However, this also involves maintaining a relatively large army for a considerable time, an option which is not always possible given fragile economies and competing demands for limited resources.

Regional and National Security Issues

It was agreed that the timing and sequencing of demobilization and reintegration programs also affect and are affected by regional and national security conditions. No party to conflict will effectively demobilize unless adequate security exists, and on-going instability threatens the effective reintegration of ex-combatants. Thus participants recognized the need, in some instances, for relatively large military establishments to be maintained in the short-term to ensure security and stability, provided that such militaries were professional, well-trained and efficient. In this regard also, they stressed that demobilization had to be carefully planned in order not to threaten fragile security and stability.

In terms of national security, several participants indicated the need for confidence building, not only between previously conflicting parties, but also with the civilian population. Civilian populations will undoubtedly have suffered during hostilities, and it is by no means certain that they will welcome demobilized ex-combatants back into their communities, in some instances because of war experiences, and in others because they fear disruption and lawlessness. Additionally, participants noted that communities could resent what they considered to be special treatment afforded to ex-combatants. It was agreed that therefore confidence building and dissemination of information about demobilization and reintegration should be part of broader peace building and conflict management efforts.

Participants also noted the need for the creation of civil security, and a normative environment conducive to peace and stability. Thus they stressed the need for rule of law, including an independent judiciary, a functioning court system, and effective law enforcement by a professional civilian police force. Participants also recognized the role which increased democratization, participation in governance and inclusionary political systems, could play in conflict prevention. However, they recognized that these were essentially long-term measures, and emphasized that there was still need to ensure security and stability in the short-term.

The importance of regional security for both conflict prevention and for controlling cross-border arms trade was recognized. Participants also acknowledged that unemployed and disaffected ex-combatants posed a threat to regional, as well as national, security. Given these regional dimensions, several participants suggested that regional security cooperation arrangements could be helpful and should

³ A number of countries have pursued this option. Nigeria demobilized over a period of time as part of a process of restructuring. Uganda embarked on a specific program of demobilization and reintegration after the national army had been in existence for a number of years. Zimbabwe, which absorbed a relatively large number of ex-combatants into its national army is now considering restructuring and demobilization. In South Africa, demobilization will take place as a component of integration and restructuring implemented over a number of years.

be pursued. Participants also noted the role which national forces could play in regional peacekeeping operations.

Disarmament and Disposition of Arms

There was unanimous agreement that disarmament and disposition of arms are of crucial importance to both effective demobilization and reintegration, and also to lasting peace and security. It was also agreed that a climate of confidence was required before disarmament could be effectively undertaken. All country cases highlighted the difficulties of disarmament, in part because of the difficulties of ascertaining the number of arms in circulation. While each country had attempted disarmament as part of its demobilization program, it was agreed that this had generally been less than effective, and that large numbers of weapons remained in circulation after demobilization had been completed.

The discussions and country experiences clearly illustrated the problems of implementing disarmament programs, however well-designed. Participants noted difficulties in ascertaining quantity and types of weapons in circulation, problems of obtaining accurate lists of weapons and location of arms from parties to the conflict in a timely manner, and a tendency for parties to the conflict to withhold information until they were confident that the peace process would hold. They also commented on the logistical difficulties in collecting and storing weapons, and ensuring their speedy removal from cantonment areas, problems of ensuring that disarmament took place prior to demobilization, and the low quality of weapons, and the number per combatant turned in, with the better weapons being retained or sold on the black market.

In addition, participants noted that the environment in which disarmament took place affected its success, and cited the problems of porous borders and the existence of black markets for weapons, both within the country itself and in neighboring countries. Participants also indicated that it was almost impossible to ensure effective disarmament without political will on the part of all parties to the conflict, and that there could be no disarmament as long as conflict persists. It was also agreed that disarmament was more difficult when there are a number of conflicting parties, little effective control over combatants, and general insecurity and instability with a breakdown of societal structures and an absence of rule of law and effective governance.

It was agreed that disarmament had to be continued after demobilization had been completed, and that a variety of measures had to be implemented to control the flow of arms across borders and to establish penalties for the possession of weapons. While no programs had been completely successful, the utility of amnesty programs after conflict ended, combined with penalties for possession of weapons and improved civil security through the existence of a professional police force, were recognized. In addition, participants noted the need for the cooperation of surrounding countries in controlling the arms trade and in ensuring the hand over of weapons, as in several instances weapons had been cached in bordering countries.

Economic, political and social implications

It was agreed that demobilization and reintegration programs have to be designed taking the overall political, economic and social circumstances of each country into account, as these affect the timing and sequencing, as well as the scope, of programs. Participants recognized that in some instances, while economic circumstances could mandate limited programs, political and social realities would

necessitate more costly and lengthy efforts. However, most participants also stressed that large and costly military structures were not economically viable given their present circumstances.

Participants recognized that the cost of demobilization and reintegration programs have to be weighed against other demands for limited resources. They realized that, while donor funding could be sought for demobilization and reintegration programs, some costs would still have to be met from public funds. Additionally, it was recognized that donor funding was limited, and that therefore funds provided for demobilization and reintegration programs would in all probability have to be found from existing assistance budgets, thus leaving less for development efforts. While recognizing the need for cost-effective programs, participants stressed that maintenance of peace had a cost, which should not be underestimated when designing programs, and cautioned against possibly jeopardizing the prospects for long-term peace in order to make short-term cost savings. They emphasized that the "peace dividend" could not be assessed only in terms of immediate monetary savings, but that it should also be seen in a wider context of creating an enabling environment for reconstruction and development.

It was noted that, increasingly, demobilization would have to be undertaken in a climate of economic austerity and reduction of public expenditures. Participants also recognized the difficulties of effective reintegration given fragile economies and already high unemployment. They acknowledged that the scope for public sector employment for the demobilized was more limited than in the past, and that in most countries the private sector was too weakly developed to provide employment opportunities for ex-combatants who frequently lacked marketable skills. It was suggested that additional attention had to be given to providing training which would meet the employment possibilities, look at more creative ways to encourage private sector businesses to employ ex-combatants, and perhaps in the short-term to create public works programs in areas such as de-mining and infrastructure rehabilitation to provide employment.

Participants agreed that countries have to make choices about how to allocate public funds, and that funding for demobilization and reintegration have to be balanced with other demands. They agreed that reduced levels of military spending would increase the funding available for social services and for more productive sectors of the economy. However, they stressed the need for a longer term perspective on the "peace dividend" as in the immediate term the cost savings brought about by demobilization could be minimal, given the cost of such programs and also the cost of making military establishments more efficient.

Participants recognized the tensions between effectively providing for ex-combatants, and facilitating their reintegration into civilian life, and potentially favoring ex-combatants at the expense of other sectors of society. However, given the potential threat to security and stability posed by unemployed ex-combatants, participants agreed that demobilization and reintegration programs were required. They emphasized, however, that such programs should be implemented within the context of general reconstruction and rehabilitation, rather than as separate, special interest programs.

Design and implementation of country level programs

Differences in country programs notwithstanding, the following key issues emerged from the discussions, and could usefully be taken into account in the design and implementation of future programs.

Profile of target group The discussions highlighted the importance of ascertaining the profile of persons to be demobilized and reintegrated. In most instances, particularly when conflict has lasted for some time, the people who have to be assisted by demobilization and reintegration programs are families, not single men. This has implications, not only for the cost of the programs, but also in terms of the provisions to be made at all stages of the process. It was also noted that in some instances, female ex-combatants have to be demobilized, and that programs therefore have to be flexible enough to accommodate their needs.

Vulnerable groups Participants agreed that the special needs of the traumatized and disabled have to be met, if such people are to be effectively reintegrated into civilian society. This is not to say that demobilization programs themselves should cover all of the needs of such people, but rather that programs are coordinated with on-going social-welfare, education and health services to ensure that appropriate attention is afforded to vulnerable groups. The need to address the needs of spouses and children of deceased ex-combatants was noted, and participants also highlighted the particular reintegration problems faced by child soldiers, and the need for special attention to be provided to them.

Training and rehabilitation programs The discussion clearly indicated that skills training or education provided under demobilization and reintegration programs has to be linked to employment possibilities, and that the profile of ex-combatants has to be taken into account. Specific country experiences indicated that a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to such programs than had been employed in the past was necessary. For example, in some instances technical skills training had not led to long-term productive employment, as people lacked the administrative and managerial skills to make small businesses or cooperative ventures work. Another basic problem was that frequently demobilized ex-combatants found it very difficult to adjust to civilian life, as they had become accustomed to a highly structured existence. They thus found taking decisions, managing money, and adapting to a civilian work environment difficult.

Expectations of ex-combatants Country experiences also highlighted the problems of unrealistic expectations of ex-combatants. While this was possibly more acute in the case of liberation struggles, it was an issue in all cases, as combatants obviously felt that they deserved adequate compensation, benefits and pensions following years of service. Participants noted the frequent discrepancy between expectations of ex-combatants who assumed that they would be incorporated into a re-constructed army, taken care of by the state in the form of generous pensions or rehabilitation packages, or given jobs in the public sector, and the reality of the relatively limited packages provided under demobilization programs. This highlighted the need for adequate advance information about demobilization programs and the composition of the national army, as well as transparency in the selection and demobilization process.

Demobilization programs and packages It was agreed that the type of program and demobilization package had to be designed according to specific country circumstances and available funding. Thus in some instances community-based programs would be more effective while in others targeted programs would be required. Several participants suggested that, while demobilization programs had to be targeted, reintegration programs should be community-based or components of broader reconstruction efforts. To date, country programs have employed a variety of different packages, including single cash payments, in-kind support, training and education, and regular cash payments over a period of time. In all cases, a significant issue was whether ex-combatants felt that packages provided adequate compensation, and whether they were equitably determined and allocated. Several participants

raised the issue of pensions, and long-term compensation, and the need for demobilized soldiers to have the same opportunities as other public sector employees, or those who were retained in the army

Monitoring and evaluation Participants agreed that there was need for on-going monitoring of programs, in order to assess their effectiveness and determine what lessons could be learned. It was also agreed that there should be some tracking of demobilized ex-combatants over a reasonable period to assess how far they had been successfully reintegrated into society, the role which reintegration programs had played, and what problems had been encountered. They noted the tensions between the need for effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of programs, and the problems of creating additional bureaucratic structures, which also have cost implications.

Implementation of programs It was agreed that programs should be as cost-effective as possible, given limited funds. It was also agreed that information about potential funding had to be taken into account when designing programs, in order to avoid damaging delays and shortages of funds during implementation. It was agreed that programs, once begun, had to be implemented with minimum delays, and that particular attention should be paid to the time spent in camps prior to demobilization. Participants noted that most attention to date has been afforded to demobilization, and stressed the need for a longer-term perspective, with greater attention and resources given to reintegration. Participants recognized the role which non governmental organizations could play in the implementation of demobilization and reintegration programs. They also recommended that mechanisms be found to facilitate exchange of information and experiences regarding demobilization and reintegration programs, particularly among Africans.

Veterans associations While participants agreed that ex-combatants had to re-integrate into civilian society and cease to think of themselves as a special group, the utility of veterans associations or other institutions to address the special needs of veterans was noted. It was also agreed that such organizations could play a useful role in both implementing and monitoring demobilization and reintegration programs, as well as increasing the ownership of such programs.

Role of the international community

Participants noted that the international community has a role in supporting conflict management and demobilization and reintegration efforts, not only in terms of providing financial support, but also as neutral third parties in peace negotiations and in implementing peace agreements, and several participants highlighted the constructive role played by the international community in this regard. However, participants also stressed the need for ownership of demobilization and reintegration programs by the country implementing them, and also for such programs to be designed to meet the demands of specific country situations. Thus they stressed the importance of developing effective partnerships between implementing countries and the international community, and on drawing on experiences of other countries when designing programs.

Participants particularly noted the need for donor commitment and support over the long term, and for funds to be provided for reintegration, not just demobilization. They also stressed the need for greater flexibility in the design and implementation of programs, and understanding of the complexities of demobilization and the range of issues which affect it. Participants also stressed that donor support was required, not only for specific demobilization and reintegration programs, but also for broader post-conflict reconstruction and efforts to promote civil security. In this regard, they recognized the need for

demobilization and reintegration programs to be included in country rehabilitation and development strategies, in order that funds could be allocated accordingly

While stressing the need for flexibility and adequate provision of funds, participants realized that funding is limited and that therefore programs have to be cost-effective. It was also recognized that donors have to operate within funding cycles and budget allocations, and that regulations and procedures have to be followed. It was agreed that close communication and coordination between donors and implementing countries could help address issues and constraints. Noting the problems which caused by funding delays and underfunded programs, participants also agreed that potential donors should be involved in the planning and preparation process as soon as possible, to ensure consistency between program design and funding availability.

Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

The workshop agreed on the following summary conclusions and recommendations

1 Demobilization and reintegration programs constitute part of the conflict management process in the same manner as preventive diplomacy, and also as part of peace building. They facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for post-conflict reconstruction. However, attention and resources have to be afforded to longer-term reintegration, which is an integral part of the overall program, as well as to demobilization, if a climate of security and stability is to be maintained.

2 Demobilization and reintegration are complex. Programs should be designed taking into account the specific socio-cultural, economic and political situations of each country. They should also be seen in the overall development context of the country, and be integrated into the reconstruction and development process. These programs should target not only demobilized soldiers, but also families. They should also address the needs of vulnerable groups, such as minors and the disabled, who also need to be reintegrated into a civilian environment.

3 The peace dividend should not be seen only in terms of financial savings, but also in its broader context of promoting the necessary conditions for sustainable development. However, demobilization and reintegration programs should still be as cost effective as possible given the resources available in each situation.

4 Notwithstanding differences in country experiences, considerable room exists for exchanges of information and experiences among African countries. Organizations such as the OAU and the UN should promote such exchanges of information and experience. The use of Africans who have experience and expertise in this area should be encouraged and supported by the international community.

5 Experience shows that effective demobilization and reintegration programs require cooperation between African countries and their development partners. African leadership is crucial to the success of demobilization and reintegration programs. African governments should work with the private sector, NGOs (including veterans' associations), and communities themselves to design and implement effective demobilization and reintegration programs.

6 The importance of effective demobilization and reintegration to long term stability justifies the establishment of appropriate institutions, within both government and the nongovernmental sectors, to facilitate the integration of ex-combatants into community life and structures.

7 International, regional and sub-regional organizations should closely monitor the implementation of peace agreements, with special emphasis on the disposition of arms and the traffic of arms across international borders

8 Donor organizations should be invited to participate in the planning of demobilization and reintegration programs at an early stage to ensure adequate coordination of the design and funding of such programs

In addition, it was suggested and agreed that those representatives who had made country presentations should provide summaries of their country programs in a standardized format to the co-organizers of the workshop, who would compile them and issue them as part of the documentation for the workshop, in addition to the final report

Workshop on Post-Conflict Demobilization in AfricaIssues Paper¹

To date, there have been relatively few demobilization and reintegration programs, and no completely successful experiences to draw upon. However, although most demobilization experiences are either too recent to permit retrospective analysis or are on-going, some lessons have been learned and some key issues identified. The workshop is intended to provide an opportunity to share experiences and discuss some of the lessons learned, with a view to promoting a better understanding of the complexities of post-conflict demobilization and reintegration in Africa, and of the issues which need to be addressed. It is hoped that it will thus contribute to the effective design and implementation of future demobilization and reintegration programs.

This brief issues paper is not intended to provide general background information on demobilization and reintegration, or to discuss specific demobilization and reintegration programs. It does not cover all the issues which are relevant to a discussion of post-conflict demobilization and reintegration. Rather, it provides a brief discussion of some of the topics which will be raised during the course of the workshop in order to stimulate discussion.

A Demobilization as a conflict management issueDiscussion

Demobilization and reintegration can be undertaken either immediately following conflict, or at a later date. While many of the stages are the same in both cases, the climate in which the process takes place is fundamentally different, and requires that greater or less emphasis be placed on various components. Equity issues are more acute in immediate post-conflict demobilization, and are likely to arise over the numbers to be demobilized, the size, structure and composition of the army of national reconciliation, and the benefits offered to demobilized ex-combatants relative to those provided to civilian populations. Post-conflict military re-structuring consequent upon demobilization often also requires military training to accommodate considerable differences in educational background, institutional familiarity and military experience of members of the newly-formed army of national reconciliation.

Although post-conflict demobilization is essentially a political issue, it still needs to be conducted effectively and efficiently, if security is to be maintained. Delays in implementation can jeopardize the whole peace process, or result in armed ex-combatants resorting to banditry. Programs which are too ambitious can fall apart because insufficient funds are provided or funds are not provided in a timely manner, or because they are too complex to be administered effectively. Conversely, the danger of general civil insecurity and banditry is compounded if ex-combatants do not feel that they have been fairly treated and adequately rewarded for their years of service.

Issues What lessons have been learned to date about how demobilization can facilitate or impede other conflict management efforts? What issues need to be taken into consideration when designing demobilization and reintegration programs? How can monitoring of demobilization and reintegration programs be linked with other on-going conflict management efforts?

1 This paper is intended as a background document for the workshop, and does not represent the views of either the OAU or the GCA.

B Peace agreements and post-conflict demobilization and reintegration as part of national reconstruction

Discussion

In immediate post-conflict situations demobilization and reintegration are likely to be conditions of peace agreements. As peace agreements are essentially political compromises, they often set unrealistic timetables for subsequent activities, and do not discuss design or implementation issues. Additionally, donor funding which may be pledged in support of peace agreements frequently cannot be made available immediately. However, incomplete demobilization threatens the peace process itself, while hastily implemented demobilization with inadequate attention to reintegration can create longer-term civil security issues.

Tensions between the need for political compromise during peace negotiations and well-planned, realistic demobilization programs are often exacerbated by the fact that those persons involved in peace negotiations tend not to be those responsible for designing and implementing demobilization programs. On the donor side too, the agencies involved in the two processes tend to be different and there is frequently insufficient dialogue between them, resulting in misunderstanding about what is feasible. The net result is often a lack of understanding, on the part of those involved in peace negotiations, about both the time and money required for adequate demobilization and reintegration. This is matched, on the part of those charged with designing and implementing demobilization programs, with a lack of awareness of the political realities which go into getting a peace agreement. Greater dialogue about demobilization programs during the process of peace agreements would help, as would provision for the details and timetable of demobilization components to be worked out separately. From the donor side, special, quick-disbursing funds would also help avoid damaging delays. It would be useful if planning for demobilization could begin as early as possible and include all parties who would be involved in program implementation. However, programs should not begin until the political context is conducive to their implementation.

Peace agreements obviously are also concerned with national reconstruction following conflict, and the whole process of military restructuring, demobilization and reintegration has to be seen in this wider political context. However, as with all programs, there is a danger that attention can be focused on the specifics of the programs, and the wider context lost sight of. While demobilization and reintegration have to be completed, there has also to be some equity in treating other war-affected groups, such as displaced persons and refugees. In internal conflict, particularly when it has continued for some time, it is unlikely that any sector of the population will have been unaffected. Care therefore has to be taken to ensure that demobilization and reintegration packages do not create the impression that soldiers are somehow being rewarded, while others continue to suffer.

Issues There have now been a number of demobilization and reintegration programs implemented as components of peace agreements in Africa. What can be drawn from such experiences to facilitate the design and implementation of future programs? Is greater coordination between those entities involved with peace negotiations and those responsible for designing demobilization and reintegration programs possible? If so, how can it be fostered? Is it possible for donors to develop mechanisms for quick disbursement of funds, or to provide assistance early in the process?

C National and regional security requirements for effective demobilization

Discussion

The cessation of hostilities due to a peace agreement does not necessarily mean that conflicts have been resolved, or that peace and security will be established and maintained. A number of other, on-

going conflict management and confidence-building efforts usually need to be undertaken over quite a long period of time before either of these are even possible. No party to a conflict will feel secure about disarming and demobilizing troops unless and until it is assured that the other party or parties will also disarm and demobilize.

Regional security is also affected by the fact that demobilized ex-combatants from one country can become mercenaries in other conflicts, and that arms can be transported across borders and fuel other internal conflicts. Regional security arrangements could help build confidence. Agreements to control cross-border arms traffic are important, as are agreements to develop adequate in-country legislation and penalties for illegal possession of arms. Regional cooperation to develop conflict management mechanisms and peacekeeping arrangements could also be very useful.

Internal security, in the sense that politically organized armed conflict is avoided, can usually be established if formerly opposing factions agree to elections which guarantee some form of political inclusion. However, more general civil security requires a variety of measures that protect the civilian population. Such measures, which include adequate legislation, a functioning legal system, a trained a-political police force, and civilian control over the military, cannot be put in place immediately.

Issues What constitutes an adequate regional and national security environment conducive to demobilization, and how can this be developed? What are the possibilities of regional cooperation on these issues? What can be done to promote and maintain internal civil security following conflict?

D Disarmament and disposition of arms

Discussion

The ready availability of arms is one of the major reasons why conflict in Africa in the recent past has been both so devastating and so long-lasting. Given that in many cases opposing forces have been unable to adequately take and defend clearly demarcated areas, internal conflicts in Africa have generally taken their greatest toll on civilian populations. Not only have vast numbers of innocent people been killed, but many more have been displaced, lost their livelihood, psychologically traumatized and physically injured. Compounding the problem, landmines continue to kill and maim after ceasefires have been agreed by opposing factions, and small arms become a lucrative source of both trade and banditry in fragile economies.

Disarmament is a pre-requisite for peace, and a cornerstone of demobilization programs, and yet probably the most difficult aspect to effectively accomplish. It is almost impossible to achieve complete disarmament, particularly in post-conflict situations, in part because it is almost impossible to establish the number and type of weapons in circulation. Effective disarmament requires the cooperation of political and military leaders, which depends on both their willingness to accept the terms of peace agreements and their belief that opposing forces will also abide by them. It also requires that military leadership has control over combatants. However, as weapons are not always well regulated or accounted for, it also depends on individuals, many of whom may see possession of a weapon as an insurance policy in the face of uncertainty. This is compounded by the "arms culture" which frequently develops over long periods of conflict.

It is unlikely that the encampment and disarmament phases of demobilization programs will result in all, or even the vast majority of weapons being reclaimed. Even if this component is relatively successful, ineffective monitoring during encampment can mean that reclaimed weapons find their way onto the black market or back into ex-combatants' hands. Additional measures therefore are required to try to ensure security. Various experiments have been conducted -- weapons buy-back programs, search

and seizure of arms, amnesty programs which allow for the return of weapons with no questions asked -- all with varying degrees of success. Establishing a legal and normative environment which provides both punishment and censure for possession of weapons is essential for effective disarmament and demilitarization of societies, but this is almost impossible to achieve in the short-term for countries in the aftermath of conflict.

Issues What has been learned to date about disarmament components of demobilization programs? What lessons are there from amnesty or gun buy-back programs? Based on past experience, what should be avoided or encouraged, and how can some of the problems inherent in these programs best be addressed?

E Financial, political, and social dimensions of demobilization and reintegration at the national level

Discussion

Demobilization and reintegration programs have to be seen in the macro-economic, political and social context of the country in which they are being implemented. Although different programs may have similar components, the outcome, especially of reintegration, is likely to vary because of country-specific circumstances. However well-designed, demobilization and reintegration programs cannot be successful in the long term unless ex-combatants can be productive and contribute to economic growth.

It is often assumed that provision of training will permit ex-combatants to be absorbed into the workforce, or become productive farmers or small scale entrepreneurs. However, in reality, productive employment cannot be guaranteed, even with skills-training, in times of economic depression and high unemployment, issues of land tenure and land use, producer prices, and access to inputs and markets affect ex-combatants as much as other farmers, and an enabling environment is required before private sector activity can develop. In the past, demobilized soldiers could more easily be absorbed into the public sector, but increasingly governments are trying to cut spending, reduce the number of public sector employees, and either privatize state enterprises or make them more financially viable. As a result, the economic climate for demobilization and reintegration is frequently difficult, and yet special treatment of demobilized ex-combatants is neither politically or socially feasible, nor economically sustainable.

Demobilization and reintegration programs are costly, especially when large numbers are involved or when ex-combatants have unrealistically high expectations, particularly in post-conflict situations. The financial costs of demobilization are also likely to be higher the more senior officers are involved, as they tend to expect better retrenchment packages or employment opportunities than other ranks. Most countries do not have the resources to meet the costs of demobilization and reintegration, unless these resources are diverted from elsewhere. Substantial donor funding is therefore required, but donors also have limited funds. Additionally, substantial external assistance is required for general post-conflict reconstruction, including resettlement of displaced persons and refugees.

Socially, demobilization is not always popular, and special programs for the demobilized can cause resentment, particularly following civil strife, when civilian populations have suffered greatly. And yet, unemployed, discontented and impoverished demobilized soldiers present a greater threat to civil security than other population groups. For this reason, community-centered reintegrated programs have advantages over specially-targeted programs, but do not always live up to the expectations of the ex-combatants. Additionally, demobilization and reintegration have social dimensions, in that families, not just soldiers themselves are affected. Some ex-combatants, such as the disabled and child soldiers, have special needs which cannot be met by a single demobilization package. They tend to face greater reintegration problems than others, and cannot always be easily absorbed by societies whose socio-political fabric has already been strained by years of conflict. However, governments faced with many

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demands for limited resources can find it difficult to provide adequate social welfare programs to assist such people

Issues These wider economic and social problems obviously cannot be addressed by demobilization and reintegration programs, and yet need to be taken into account. From experience to date, what lessons can be learned to design programs which are financially feasible, which offer the best chance of successful reintegration, and which avoid creating unrealistic expectations? Are there any best practices which can be identified?

F Design and implementation of country-level demobilization and reintegration programs

Discussion

Obviously, each country program has to be designed according to the particular needs of country, and taking special circumstances into account. However, there are some general issues which need to be considered, and a number of steps which have to be included in any demobilization and reintegration program. The attached chart (taken from "Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Personnel in Africa: Evidence from Seven Country Case Studies", World Bank, October 1993) lays out the stages in a "typical" demobilization and reintegration program. In reality, however, demobilization and reintegration programs tend not to be very easily implemented, and are subject to delays and setbacks.

It is important that ex-combatants are adequately prepared for their return to civilian life, but that their expectations are not unrealistically high. In many instances, particularly when people have spent most of their adult life as combatants, or became combatants at an early age, demobilized soldiers are "institutionalized" and find it difficult to adjust to civilian life. Additionally, while most ex-combatants are men, provision has to be made for demobilization and reintegration of female ex-combatants.

The main stages of demobilization and reintegration programs are (a) negotiation of the number of combatants to be demobilized, definition of criteria governing the selection process, and determination of the size, composition and structure of the resulting national armed force, (b) encampment and disarmament, during which the combatants are housed in designated locations, identified, and disarmed, and during which they participate in training and other programs to equip them (and their families) for a return to civilian life, and (c) release, at which point ex-combatants (and their families) are transported to their final destination, or given their mustering out package which permits them to return to their home area, and following which they participate in any on-going reintegration programs which have been established.

A number of issues have to be taken into consideration at each stage of the process. These include

- the nature and type of training and other rehabilitation programs,
- provision for family members during encampment,
- the nature and content of mustering out packages,
- one-off payments vs phased packages, and community-based vs targeted programs,
- re-integration provision for family members,
- provision for ex-combatants with special needs,
- land tenure and land use,
- landmine clearance and rehabilitation of infrastructure,
- mental and physical health of ex-combatants and family members,
- employment opportunities,
- provision of credit,

- duration of programs and sequencing of benefits,
- acceptance by, and integration into, communities

Adequate monitoring and evaluation of programs is very important, both to ensure effective implementation, and to provide information which could be used in other programs

Issues What lessons have been learned from the design and implementation of demobilization and reintegration programs to date? What mechanisms need to be instituted so that programs can be effectively monitored and evaluated? What constitutes success in terms of demobilization and reintegration programs, and how can this be gauged?

G The role of the international community and mobilization of national and international resources for demobilization

Discussion

An increasing number of countries are likely to seek the help of the international community with demobilization and reintegration, both as part of post-conflict reconstruction and in peacetime. Some of the demobilization and reintegration programs undertaken to date have been very costly in terms of the cost per participant. Given limited donor resources, it is unlikely that such high cost programs will be possible in Africa, particularly if the number of programs increases. It is also probable the countries implementing programs will be expected to meet some of the costs themselves. Additionally, greater emphasis will probably be placed on cost-effectiveness, both in the programs themselves, and in their administration, and on sustainability and impact. There is need, therefore, for realistic, easily implementable, and cost-effective demobilization and reintegration programs.

There is an inherent tension between the fact that demobilization programs are politically sensitive and have to belong to the country implementing them, and yet are largely donor funded. Additionally, because programs require management and oversight, they obviously place a burden on implementing government bureaucratic structures. Ways have to be found of implementing programs without creating large government or donor structures which run the danger of becoming institutionalized. Ways also have to be found to avoid such programs becoming donor-driven, and of ensuring that they are owned by the countries themselves. Donors have to be particularly aware of the political realities of demobilization programs. They also have to be willing to coordinate assistance to minimize funding delays, avoid fragmentation of programs and duplication of effort, and maximize the use of resources.

Although donor coordination is important, it is difficult, especially when the institutional structures of implementing countries are weak. It is also made more difficult by the fact that demobilization and reintegration programs, although part of an interconnected process, require different expertise at different stages (for example, demobilization is an essentially military operation, whereas reintegration efforts are more akin to development programs). If the international community is to become more involved with demobilization and reintegration, it is necessary to decide where the comparative advantage of both bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors lies, and to determine how they can best provide support. It is also necessary to determine what roles exist for local and international non-governmental organizations, and how African capacity in this area can be developed and utilized.

Issues What lessons have been learned from previous programs to help design realistic, implementable, and cost-effective programs and what issues need to be considered? What constitutes cost-effectiveness and how can the cost-effectiveness of demobilization and reintegration programs be gauged? From past experience, how can effective donor coordination be developed?